



The Fernwood School

High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (INCLUDING CHILD PROTECTION)

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues. This will be co-ordinated by the Health and Safeguarding Co-Ordinator.

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Introduction

Fernwood School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school. The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance.

There are four main elements to this Policy:

- Prevention (e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils)
- Protection (by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns)
- Support (to pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused)
- Working with parents (to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken)

This policy applies to **all** staff, governors and visitors to the school.

This policy has been written and is underpinned by the following government guidance:

- Children's Act 1989 & 2004
- Education Act 2011
- Working together to safeguard children 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014

Where the Governing Body provides services or activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the Governing Body should seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and protect children and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

School Commitment

Fernwood School adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. We hope that children and parents will feel free to talk about any concerns and will see school as a safe place when there are difficulties. Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously and children are encouraged to seek help from members of staff.

Our school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for Personal Development/PSHE/Citizenship which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, and which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies
- Operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children
- Keep and maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) of recruitment and vetting checks of all our employees including supply staff



Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There are, however, key people within schools and the LA who have specific responsibilities.

**The Designated Senior Lead for safeguarding is Amy Cannon.
In her absence Steve Roe is the Designated Person for Key Stage 4 and Minna Morrill for Key Stage 3.
The nominated Governors for safeguarding are Mrs Pauline Wilson and Mr Winston Davidson**

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) includes:

A. Referrals

- To recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral
- Referring cases of suspected abuse allegations to the relevant investigating agencies
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise within the educational establishment when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- Liaising with the Head Teacher to inform her of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role

B. Training

- Having a working knowledge of how the Local Safeguarding Children's Board operates, the conduct of a child protection case conference, and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- Ensuring that each member of staff has access to and understands the school's safeguarding policy especially new or part-time staff who may work with different educational establishments
- Ensuring all staff have induction training covering safeguarding issues and are able to recognise and report any concerns with urgency when they arise
- Keeping detailed, accurate and secure written records of referrals/concerns
- Obtaining access to resources and attending any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years

C. Raising Awareness

- Ensuring that our safeguarding policy is updated and reviewed annually, and working with the Governing Body regarding this
- Ensuring that parents have access to our safeguarding policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the establishment in this to avoid conflict later
- Ensuring that when children leave our school, their child protection file is copied for the new establishment as soon as possible, but transferred separately from main pupil file

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented, and followed by all staff;
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies

Governing Body

Governing Bodies are accountable for ensuring that:

- Their establishment has effective policies and procedures in place in accordance with this guidance, and monitoring the school's compliance with them
- Neither the Governing Body, nor individual governors, has a role in dealing with individual cases or a right to know details of cases (except when exercising their disciplinary functions in respect of allegations against a member of staff)



- There is an individual member of the governing body to champion safeguarding issues within the school, liaise with the Head Teacher about them, and provide information and reports to the governing body. However, it is not usually appropriate for that person to take the lead in dealing with allegations of abuse made against the Head Teacher. That is more properly the role of the Chair of Governors or, in the absence of a Chair, the vice chair
- All members of the Governing Body will receive training regarding the safeguarding of children and young people from a member of the school's safeguarding team
- Ensure that the DSL receives training in inter-agency working that is provided by, or to standards agreed by, the Local Safeguarding, Children's Board), and refresher training at two-yearly intervals, to keep his/her knowledge and skills up-to-date, and provides advice and support to other staff;
- The Head Teacher, and all other staff who work with children, undertake appropriate training which is kept up-to-date by refresher training at three-yearly intervals
- Temporary staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding and their responsibilities

Procedures

The DSL must make a decision with regards to the safety and welfare of the young people and if they are deemed to be at risk of significant harm, intervention must take place. The DSL making a child protection referral under S.47 must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. It is not possible to rely on one absolute criterion when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration. Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events which are both acute and long standing and which may impair the child's physical, psychological and social development.

In order to both understand and evidence 'significant harm', it is necessary to consider the family context, together with the child's development within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition, communication difficulties or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care also needs consideration alongside the impact on the child's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

All staff are issued with The Fernwood School - Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance booklet. This booklet meets the expectations identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and clearly identifies procedures for reporting incidents where there is a concern about a child. If a member of staff is concerned about a child's welfare then they must complete a Safeguarding Concern Form and make it known to the DSL. These concerns may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and sexual exploitation. If they are unable to find the DSL or deputy DSLs then they should make a referral themselves to Children's Services

This policy and The Fernwood School - Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance booklet is also available on line in the STAFF HANDBOOK.

This policy will be made available to parents on the school website and is also available on request. Further information for parents is contained within the school's brochure.

Records and Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All staff are clear about the need to record and report concerns about a child or children within our school. The DSL is responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be passed over to other agencies. Child Protection records are held separately from a child's school file and in secure storage.



Confidentiality

Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned (and/or those with parental responsibility) unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child or promote their welfare. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict “need to know” basis.

Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. This is a complex area and involves consideration of a number of pieces of legislation.

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child as some kinds of information may need to be shared with others. A suggested form of words that may help when talking to children is as follows:

“I will keep our conversation confidential and agree with you what information I can share, unless you tell me something that will affect your personal safety or that is illegal, but I will tell you if I am going to pass information on and who to.”

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. However, any disclosure of personal information to others, included social service departments, must always have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (Data Protection Act 1998 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, however, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of the child dictate that the information should be shared.

Supporting Pupils at Risk

Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant, and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment, and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued
- The implementation of school behaviour management policies
- A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the course of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child’s interest to do so
- The development and support of a responsible and knowledgeable staff trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations

The available UK evidence on the extent of abuse among disabled children suggests that some may be especially vulnerable to abuse, for example those who have difficulty communicating. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. It must also be stressed that in a home where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support.



Early Support: Common Assessment Framework – CAF

Practitioners should complete a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) when:

- Age appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear or
- The support of more than one additional agency is needed to meet the child or young person's needs

All appropriate staff receive CAF awareness training. Staff should discuss children who appear to have additional needs with the Designated Person for Child Protection or CAF Lead. The school will need to obtain parental/pupil consent for a CAF to be completed. In certain circumstances students are able to give their own consent for a CAF if they are old enough and considered competent to do so by the DSL. The school CAF coordinator may need to make a referral directly to other agencies.

Protecting yourself against allegations of abuse

You should seek to keep your personal contact with children under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur. The following sensible precautions can be taken when working alone with children:

- work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally
- Avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards
- Never give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses
- Do not give pupils lifts home in your car
- Do not arrange to meet pupils outside of school hours
- Never 'befriend' or chat to pupils on social network sites
- Where appropriate these points also apply to ex-students under the age of 18

Allegations of abuse against a person working in a position of trust

Children can be the victims of abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse of children carried out by any staff member or volunteer is therefore taken seriously.

All members of staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the conduct of other adults working in the school if there are indications that a child or children could be at risk of harm. Adults working in this school are encouraged to raise any concerns about conduct or practice so that this can be addressed appropriately. Allegations of abuse made against adults working in the school, whether historical or current, should be reported to the Head Teacher (or, if the allegation is against the Head Teacher, it should be reported to the Chair of Governors). Adults working in the school are also able to follow the 'Whistle Blowing Policy' if they feel unable to follow standard procedures relating to an allegation against staff.

In line with government guidance and NCSCB procedures, the Head/Chair of Governors will contact a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to discuss the allegation if the concerns are that an adult in a position of trust has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

(Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014)



E-Safety

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever developing variety of devices including PCs, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, webcams etc. place an additional risk on our children.

Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be children, to have conversations with children and in some cases arrange to meet them.

Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with pupils at this school.

Pupils can engage in or be a target of cyberbullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping), or distributing indecent images of children (e.g. sexting).

The best protection is to make pupils aware of the dangers through curriculum teaching particularly Personal Development and Sex and Relationship Education.

Protection is Prevention:

- Software is in place to minimise access and to highlight any person accessing inappropriate sites or information
- Pupils will be encouraged to discuss openly their use of technology and anything which makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in child protection concerns the school's designated child protection person should be informed immediately)
- Pupils should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address, computer passwords etc
- Pupils should adhere to the school policy on mobile phones.
- Education on e-safety will take place through the ICT curriculum, the Personal Development Curriculum and Pastoral support. i.e. Assemblies

Prevent

Prevent Strategy Lead – Mr Steve Roe

Background

Fernwood School's Prevent Strategy is in line with government guidance on schools' responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which came into effect on 1st July 2015. Under the Act, schools and other authorities have a duty to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

Prevent is a government strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorist or extremist causes. The Prevent Strategy covers all types of terrorism and extremism, including the extreme right wing, violent groups and other causes.

From July 2015 schools have a duty to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism. This means the Fernwood School has a responsibility to protect children from extremist and violent views in the same way we protect them from other dangers.



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM has been illegal since 1989. National legislation states that this applies to any British citizen or any habitual citizen. The current penalty is 14 years imprisonment.

The Fernwood School recognises that whilst there is no intent to harm a girl / young woman through FGM, the practice directly causes serious short and long term medical and psychological complications. Consequently it is a physically abusive act.

It is the aim of The Fernwood School to safeguard young people from the practice of FGM in a way that is culturally sensitive and with the fullest consultations with Nottingham City Council's Safeguarding Board.

All staff should be alert to the possibility of FGM, and training on FGM will now be a part of the statutory safeguarding training that all staff receive.

- The safety and welfare of the girl / young woman is paramount;
- All staff, including volunteers, will act in the interest of the rights of the girl / young woman, as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989);
- Any concerns about a girl at risk of FGM or having had FGM will be reported immediately to the DSL.
- Attendance will be monitored to ensure that any unusual or unexplained absence from a girl who comes from a country with prevalence of FGM will be reported and acted upon.
- Any concerns that a girl is at risk will result in an immediate referral to Children's and Families Direct.
- Any concerns that a girl is a victim of FGM will result in an immediate report to the Police through 101.
- Alongside consultation with the PSHE Association and Forward, FGM will become part of the Personal Development curriculum to inform and educate all students on the risks and help available.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that female genital mutilation (FGM) 'comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons'.

This policy complements and supports a range of other policies adopted by the school, including:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force
- Special Education Needs & Disability Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Sex Education Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

All school policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children will be reviewed annually.

